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¶ A Collection of Musical Portraits *By Gustav Kobbé*

FRIENDS of mine who have seen my collection of musical portraits and have been fascinated by it, and others who have secured duplicate sets of the collection from me and have found the fascination increase through possession and consequent familiarity, have asked me to devote to it the first issue of THE LOTUS. One of these friends, whose intuitions I never have found wrong, not only has requested, but even has insisted, that the first article in this magazine concern itself with this collection.—So what can I do but comply?

My collection consists of eighty portraits and portrait groups. Of these I reproduce with this issue one of the Schumann portraits, slightly reduced from the size of the print in the collection, but which, in spite of this, I hope, will make here the same impression of simple and unobtrusive charm.



THE subject of musical portraiture is one of much obscurity. Many of the great composers were wretchedly poor, and, when they sat for their portraits,

THE LOTUS

it rarely was to artists of such fame that much has come down to us concerning them. Many a so-called "portrait" of some great composer is not a portrait at all, but merely a fancy picture—some modern artist's idealization of a famous person long dead. Such things as pretty pictures of Bach—as if Bach ever could be accused of having been "pretty"—representations of Mozart as a second Apollo, or of Beethoven in the role of a premeditated bear, are modern, absolutely worthless as portraiture and, like the feeble attempts that have been made to describe heaven, quite unattractive to persons of cultivated taste. Yet there are many authentic musical portraits if one will but search for them intelligently and persistently. To artists who deliberately tell lies on canvas, the world owes nothing. But it little appreciates its indebtedness for the authentic portraiture of great composers, whom it half-patronized, half-starved, to a lot of honest and talented, although obscure painters, engravers and draftsmen, who worked from life and often enough, no doubt, without compensation, because in most instances their sitters were too poor to pay them. Even with Wagner we are apt to forget his early struggles in the success of his later years. But would we have the portrait of him, as he looked

in 1853, if his landlady in Zurich had not been an amateur aquerellist—and probably in love with him into the bargain?



AND speaking of Wagner, I recently came across two mistakes relating to his photographic portraits, although as Wagner is a modern composer, it might be supposed that an exact record of his portraits would easily be obtainable. By carefully going over the standard Wagner biographies for references to photographic portraits, I had figured out that he had been photographed thirty-three times between 1860 and 1882, the year before he died. By dint of much correspondence, research and other trouble of the kind known to the individual collector, I succeeded at last in securing copies of all the photographs of Wagner, from life, including the snapshot taken at Bayreuth by his friend A. von Gross, the very last and one of the best of his photographic portraits. But when I received the set, it contained thirty-four instead of only thirty-three photographs, together with the information that the record, both as regards the number and the order in which they had been taken, was made up from a list given on the authority of the Wagner family, and in which the extra photo-

THE LOTUS

graph was stated to be one of five taken by a Munich photographer in 1865. In point of fact that photographer took only four photographs of the composer. The extra one is not from life, but is a photographic copy of a Wagner portrait by Lenbach.

Moreover in the list authorized from Bayreuth a photograph taken in Brussels in 1860 is placed first in point of time and one taken in Paris in the same year second. The Paris photograph, however, is the earlier. If this circumstance does not seem of vital importance, let me add that it derives peculiar interest from certain facts. To determine which is the first known photograph of a great man is in itself not unimportant. Moreover, whoever will carefully go through Wagner's letters to Mathilde Wesendonk, will discover that he writes to her most vivaciously and entertainingly all the details connected with the taking of the Brussels photograph, distinctly refers to the Paris one as having been taken "shortly before" and complains that it makes him look "like a sentimental Marat."

I refer to these matters in order to illustrate the difficulties that are met in any attempt to secure accurate information regarding musical portraits. One cannot trust to authorities, but only to personal re-

search. Here is a series of photographs of a great composer, whose widow and son still are living and, being aware of the sentimental and commercial value of everything connected with him, have, with all the advantages in their favor, gathered and still are gathering every scrap of information, every relic and souvenir associated with the name of Richard Wagner. Yet in the matter of his portraits they make mistakes. By bearing this in mind some idea will be formed of the obscurities that had to be penetrated in determining the authenticity and the circumstances surrounding the origin of the musical portraits in a collection which, like mine, goes back as far as Palestrina.



THIS Palestrina portrait is dignified and beautiful, and a fit beginning of the collection. In fact the artistic quality of each print was carefully considered by me before it was definitely chosen. The "Palestrina" is based on a portrait in the library of the Vatican and was made by the artist-lithographer Hesse, a pupil of David and Isabey, who produced many lithographic portraits. Another interesting portrait of one of the old men is that of Orlando Lasso, the leading representative of the Netherland school. This

THE LOTUS

portrait I secured from a curious old Latin book, Boissardo's "Bibliographia Chalcographia," published in Frankfurt in 1664.

The Bach print is a group picture. It shows the best of the very few authentic portraits of Bach, the one painted, not many years before the great composer's death, by Elias Gottlob Haussmann, a German artist of the XVIIIth century. With this are grouped the Church of St. Thomas, of which Bach was cantor; the St. Thomas School, in which he taught; the observatory and the Bach monument in Leipsig. The Handel is that one of Thomas Hudson's Handel portraits usually reproduced as a bust portrait only, but here shown entire. The original is in the Bodleian library in Oxford. No other portrait of Handel gives him such a commanding aspect of mental and physical power. Hudson was a pupil of Richardson and a favorite portrait painter until his popularity was overshadowed by Reynolds. Interesting in connection with the Haydn portrait in the collection is the fact that the exact date of its production has been ascertained. It was drawn from life, March 20, 1794, when Haydn was in London, by George Dance and later was engraved by William Daniell. It is a remarkable portrait in that the fea-

tures, although somewhat dull and heavy, yet attract one by their seriousness and suggestion of stubborn determination.



I think my collection is especially interesting for the series of portraits it contains of several composers, who not only are famous figures in the history of music, but whose personalities give them peculiar fascination. These are Mozart—careless, shiftless, affectionate, poor and always adorable; Beethoven—deaf, morose, self-centered—a powerful, noble and pathetic figure; Liszt—man of the world, matchless virtuoso, composer, of irresistible personal magnetism and infinite charm; Wagner—a theorist and reformer, who knew how to put his theories and reforms into practice; the most aggressive character in music and a genius so great that, to borrow a phrase from the diction of the conquerors, he has changed the whole map of music. Of the eighty portraits in the collection more than forty, in the aggregate, are devoted to these four composers. There is a smaller but very interesting series of Schumann pictures, and several portraits of Paganini that admirably reproduce the weird personality of a virtuoso whom the superstitious suspected of being the devil taken to fiddling. Each of the longer series (Mozart, Beethoven, Liszt,

THE LOTUS

Wagner) may justly be said to form a little collection within the larger one.



MOZART was an infant prodigy. When only four years old he played at the Austrian court, winning every one by his genius and charm and, with the ingenuousness of a child, feeling entirely at ease amid the most brilliant surroundings. The Empress Maria Theresa presented him with a court costume belonging to one of the little Archdukes. In this he was painted at the age of six. The artist is unknown, but the portrait is charming. In 1763, while in Paris, he was portrayed in a group with his father and sister. The two children are at the piano, the father is playing the violin. The picture is by Louis C. de Carmontelle, an artist, teacher of mathematics and, apparently, general utility man to the House of Orleans. The group is gracefully composed and, like many other pictures by Carmontelle, was engraved by de la Fosse. From 1765-66 date two portraits, one by Thaddaus Helbling showing him at the piano, the other by Dominicus van der Smissen. That these two portraits actually were painted from life cannot be authenticated, but that they should have been painted at all is ample evidence of the fame Mozart enjoyed even

while still in his boyhood.

THE LOTUS



DURING a visit to Rome in 1770, Mozart, then fourteen years old, was painted by Pompeo Girolamo Battoni, whom our own painter, Benjamin West, knew and who was the teacher of Bembridge, another early American painter. Among engravings of this portrait is one published in this country, the work of John Rogers, an Englishman who came to New York about 1850 and died there about 1888. Then there is the Mozart family group, executed in 1870 by J. N. de la Croce who was a pupil of Lorenzoni and made over 5000 portraits. As in the Carmontelle group Mozart and his sister are at the piano. The father, who is behind it and leaning upon it, violin in hand, is listening. The mother had died two years before, but she is shown in a portrait on the wall, so that this picture represents the entire family. I have copies of all these in my collection and, of course, a copy of the Tischbein portrait, which more nearly comes up to the popular conception of Mozart's looks than any of the other authentic or semi-authentic portraits. It is true that Mozart's last surviving son cast doubts upon its authenticity, but not until nearly sixty years after it had been painted.

THE LOTUS

The last time Mozart was in Berlin, in 1789, a medallist named Posch made a boxwood medallion of him. What purports to be a photograph of this medallion is published by the Mozarteum in Salzburg. It is, however, a photograph made from a not entirely correct engraving of the medallion which I traced to a German musical paper of 1793. My print is from the medallion itself. Another of my Mozart prints is interesting because the original was published in Zwickau by the brothers Schumann, the father and uncle of Robert Schumann who were in the publishing business.



CHARM rather than strength characterizes the Mozart portraits; strength rather than charm those of Beethoven. The first two of these were drawn in Vienna in 1801 and 1815. I have found a print of the former in the issue of February, 1804, of the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, and of the latter on the title page of the same paper in the bound volume for the year 1817. It is there stated to be from a crayon drawing by Louis Letronne, and also is said to have been used as a frontispiece to the first edition of "Fidelio." Wagner's favorite portrait of Beethoven, which hung in his study in Bayreuth, was by J. R.

Krausse. But the Beethoven likeness that impresses one as being most lifelike, is found in some pencil sketches by J. P. Lyser, who made portraits of many famous men, but himself died in poverty and obscurity. Beethoven's friend, Breuning, vouches for the admirable fidelity to life of the Lyser Beethoven sketches, merely taking exception to the tilt of the hat in one which shows Beethoven as he appeared in the streets of Vienna.



"Every change of thought or feeling showed itself at once unmistakably in his features," wrote the artist F. A. von Kloeber, who painted the composer in 1817. Another portrait from life is that by Decker. I found an advertisement of this portrait in a musical publication of November, 1827, where it is vouched for as having been drawn by Johann Stephan Decker and engraved on copper by Steinmuller, the publishers being Artaria & Co., of Vienna. The print bears Beethoven's autograph and a lyre with a broken string, the composer having died between Decker's completion of the portrait in 1826 and its publication. Of this and of the other Beethoven portraits mentioned there are prints in my collection, as well as of the portraits that were made from life by Schimon, in 1819, and by Stieler, in 1822, the latter showing him

THE LOTUS

in the act of composing the "Missa Solemnis." There also is a portrait of Countess Therese Brunswick, to whom, for a while, Beethoven was engaged to be married and to whom, as has now been proved, he addressed the letter beginning, "Immortal beloved," which was discovered among his effects.



OF Paganini Heine wrote that sorrow, genius and hell had left their impress on his countenance, and this is shown in the remarkable portrait reproduced from a daguerreotype. This weird virtuoso's superb control over everything relating to the technique of his art is evidenced in the poise of the violin bow, which, during the long time that was required to take a daguerreotype, he held in air ready for the stroke. The claw-like fingers—talons Fétis called them—are clearly shown and the whole uncanny personality is revealed. The pose, from life, of course, is wonderful. After Paganini's death his reputation suffered because violinists, unable to master the technical difficulties of his compositions, belittled them. Now, however, the standard of technical proficiency is so high, that these works gradually are finding their way back into the repertoire, a fact that gives additional value to this likeness of Paganini in the act of playing the

instrument of which he was master.

Schumann's portrait, photographed from the lithograph by Edward Kaiser, the original drawing for which belongs to the Society of Friends of Music, in Vienna, has been called "simply adorable" by one of the composer's admirers. He is standing, in profile, the pose beautiful through its very simplicity, because so wholly in keeping with his character. I have also the Bendemann portrait, which the Schumann family considered his best likeness; a charming picture of him with his wife, the famous pianist, Clara Schumann; and a photograph, from life, of Clara at the piano.



LISZT!—His career spanned an epoch that is best described by two facts in his life. He was kissed by Beethoven; he died at "Parsifal." A boy, he played Beethoven's B-flat major trio as a piano piece in the composer's presence, and played it so well that Beethoven kissed him. He died at Bayreuth in 1886. In himself he united the best classical traditions with the championship of the modern school and especially of Richard Wagner, whose wife his daughter, Cosima, became after she left her first husband, Hans von Bulow. In the famous "Matinée chez Liszt," one of

THE LOTUS

the Austrian artist-lithographer. Kriehuber's most admirable portrait groups, Liszt is at the piano playing Beethoven's "Moonlight" sonata. One of the listeners is Hector Berlioz. Thus even in portraiture the classic and modern meet through the medium of Franz Liszt.

Von Lenz, speaking of Liszt's early days in Paris said:— "They called him 'Litz!' That's as far as the French ever got with Liszt." And I have an early French portrait of Liszt, under which the name actually is printed as "Litz!" In all other respects, however, the print is charming, showing a youth of agreeable and winning mien. Another very fine print is Liszt as a young man after another lithograph by Kriehuber. As a contrast to these two, I have a photograph of him taken on his seventieth birthday, and a copy of the etching from the Munkaczy portrait, painted the year before he died, both showing the grand old veteran—ever unwilling to acknowledge that he was one.



MY Wagner set includes a print after the aquarelle painted in Zurich, in 1853, by his landlady, Frau Stocker-Escher, and which ante-dates by seven years his earliest known photographs. There also are a picture of Wagner in his study, the Lenbach portraits,

the portrait by Herkomer, a replica of which hangs in Wahnfried at Bayreuth, several photographs from life and two group pictures. The photographs include the capital snapshot already mentioned—one of the best pictures of Wagner, which was taken by his friend, A. von Gross, in Bayreuth, only a few months before the composer's death. It is his last likeness.



Of the groups, one was painted by G. Papperitz and contains sixteen portraits. It represents a scene at Wahnfried. In the group, from left to right, are the painter, von Lenbach; Siegfried Wagner, Scaria, the basso; Cosima Wagner, Materna, who created the role of Brunnhilde; Franz Fischer, a violincellist; Wagner himself, F. Brandt, stage director at Bayreuth; Herman Levi, the orchestral conductor; Liszt at the piano and, presumably, playing from one of the "Nibelung" scores; Hans Richter, famous as a Wagner conductor; Bétz, a basso; Countess von Schleinitz, Niemann, the tenor; Countess Usedom, and a man whose name is given as von Schukowsky, but who, I think, must be Joukowski, an artist whose admiration for Wagner led him to make the original scene sketches for several Bayreuth productions. The other group picture is by W. Beckman, was painted at Bayreuth in 1882, and represents Wagner reading "Parsi-

THE LOTUS

fal," the listeners being Cosima, Liszt and Hans von Wolzogen, who wrote thematic guides to the "Ring of the Nibelung" and "Parsifal." Scene sketches for the latter music-drama are among the details of this interesting picture.



THE most characteristic photographs of Paderewski, including one of the very few showing him at the piano, were taken by Arnold Genthe, of San Francisco. His studio was destroyed during the earthquake and fire, but I have copies of these photographs. I also have an amateur photograph of Paderewski taken in his study at Morges, Switzerland. He is seated at a table and is reading the libretto of his opera, "Manru."



LULLY, Corelli, Rameau, Gluck, Grétry, Weber, Schubert, Cherubini, Mendelssohn, Berlioz, Chopin, Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Joachim, Grieg, Sullivan, Rossini and Verdi are other composers represented in the collection. I end it with the portrait of the only opera singer whose likeness I have included—Jenny Lind—and I have done this both on account of her fame and because the picture is a most beautiful one.

After all, music is universal; and that such is the

case, is shown by my collection of musical portraits, which begins with Palestrina, an Italian, and ends with Jenny Lind, who was born in Sweden, married a German in America, and died in London.



TO form this collection search was made in foreign print shops, in museums and in the print departments of public and private libraries. By photographing the prints that I was able to buy and by obtaining permission to have photographs made of unusual examples which could not be purchased, I was able to secure eighty fine photographic negatives of musical portraits. From these negatives I make the duplicates for those who desire to acquire a set of these portraits, which seem to have peculiar fascination for all who are interested in music. As to the beauty of the sets, it only seems necessary to ask the reader to compare the Schumann portrait with the half-tone and other "process" cuts employed to illustrate the average book on music. In fact it is no exaggeration to say that, just as some of the fine English mezzotints are superior to the paintings after which they are made, so many of my photoprints are finer than the originals from which they are taken. With each set I issue a catalogue, which

THE LOTUS

is considered a valuable addition to the collection, because it gives, wherever this is possible, an account of the circumstances connected with the origin of each print.



In conclusion, I feel that I must apologize once more for devoting the first number of THE LOTUS to a collection formed by myself; and again plead as my justification, the fact that friends, who have purchased copies of the collection from me and are most enthusiastic about it, have insisted on my doing so. However—I must confess that no great amount of persuasion was required. For I myself am an enthusiast—possibly a crank—on the subject of my collection and pass many an interesting hour absorbed in looking upon the great figures in musical history as their contemporaries saw and knew them.

